

July 1, 2004

Today marks the beginning of my seventh month in office, though unfortunately it is a sad day, as Troy has lost one of its strongest, proudest, and hardworking individuals.

On Wednesday night, "Mr. Riverfront Park," Clarence Bellard passed away due to complications with a brain tumor. If you didn't know Clarence, you missed an opportunity at knowing a good man.

While most people his age were long retired and enjoying other activities, Clarence was a hardworking man, who tirelessly promoted the City of Troy, and specifically Riverfront Park, which he could often be found cleaning on a daily basis.

The people you meet in my position come from all walks of life. Old and young, black and white, street smart and book smart, I have met them all. But I have never met a human being like Clarence.

If you ever had the opportunity to attend a City Council Meeting, Clarence would spend countless hours waiting for everyone to leave. He said hello to everyone, especially those he did not know closely. Everyone was treated the same way.

Earlier this year, there was sadness when we learned that Clarence had become ill. While preparing for the annual Earth Day Festival in Riverfront Park, Clarence did his best to help out, never wanting to miss a beat for the annual festival that brings many people to Troy. He talked about the fountain, the need to paint the band shell, and of the volunteers who came down to help out.

Clarence loved Riverfront Park and he loved Troy. We will truly miss him.

Calling hours for Clarence's wake are set for Friday afternoon at Riverview Funeral Home at 104th and 2nd Avenue. The funeral will then take place on Saturday morning.

Employees in City Hall have decided to take up a collection to help pay for Clarence's funeral costs, and of course we're inviting anyone who would like to participate with donations to call Gail Swota at 270-4535.

I'm going to keep it short this week, but as always, if you need anything do not hesitate to call me at 270-4401 or e-mail me. Have a great Fourth of July weekend. Be safe, enjoy the holiday, and remember the true meaning of the day. I'll see everyone next week.

Harry J Tutunjian
Mayor of Troy